

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 VIENTI 03670 090313Z

73

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 H-03 PRS-01 OMB-01 IO-14 DRC-01

/086 W

----- 085169

R 090110Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8910

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 3670

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MCAP, MASS, LA

SUBJECT: CALL ON MINISTER OF DEFENSE

1. ACCOMPANIED BY DCM CHAPMAN, I MET WITH DEFMIN SISOUK FOR TWO HOURS ON MAY 7 TO REVIEW CURRENT MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

2. FORCE REDUCTION. I WENT OVER WITH SISOUK THE CONFUSING AND ALWAYS CONTRADICTORY FIGURES WE RECEIVE FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES ON FAR/FAN/LIF STRENGTH. SISOUK SAID HE HAD NOT STUDIED THE FORCE LEVELS LATELY BUT BELIEVED THAT THE REDUCTION TO THE 60,000 LEVEL WAS LARGELY ACCOMPLISHED. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE OVERALL STRENGTH WAS PROBABLY CLOSE TO THE 60,000 LEVEL ALREADY. HE SAID HE WAS MEETING WITH THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS AND THE FAR STAFF ON MAY 10 AND WOULD SEEK TO GET THE SITUATION CLARIFIED AT THAT TIME. SISOUK SAID HE COULD NOT REMEMBER THE FIGURES BUT THAT THE PRESSURE WE HAVE BEEN MAINTAINING ON FORCE LEVELS FOR SO MANY MONTHS HAS HAD SIGNIFICANT RESULTS AND THAT IN ADDITION TO ELIMINATING GHOSTS, CASUALTIES AND AWOLS, A REAL REDUCTION OF EFFECTIVES IN FAR AS WELL AS LIF HAS TAKEN PLACE. (COMMENT. WHAT BETWEEN HIS HONEYMOON VOYAGE ABROAD, LAO NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS AND HIS TRIP TO KUALA LUMPUR, SISOUK HAS NOT REALLY BEEN AT WORK FOR MANY

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 VIENTI 03670 090313Z

WEEKS. I AM HOPEFUL THAT HE MAY NOW BEAT HIS WAY THROUGH THE

OBFUSCATORY TACTICS OF THE FAR GENERAL STAFF AND GET A RELATIVELY ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION. IF HIS IMPRESSIONS ARE CORRECT, THE 60,000 FORCE LEVEL PROBLEM MAY BE LESS ACUTE THAN I HAVE FEARED BUT THERE ARE SO MANY BREAKABLE RICE BOWLS IN THE FAR THAT EVASION AND DELAY HAVE BEEN THE ORDER OF THE DAY.)

3. INTEGRATION OF LIF. I POINTED OUT TO SISOUK THAT WE WERE AT ONE MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT ON INTEGRATION OF THE LIF AND THAT IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT ALL FAR SPACES BE FILLED WITH FORMER LIF WITHOUT DELAY. FAR WAS NOW BELOW ITS AUTHORIZED STRENGTH AND THESE SPACES SHOULD BE FILLED AT ONCE. SISOUK AGREED.

4. AIRLIFT. I DESCRIBED TO SISOUK THE SMALL MISSION CONTRACT AIR CAPABILITY WE WOULD HAVE IN THE FUTURE AND WENT OVER WITH HIM A SERIES OF CHARTS PREPARED BY THE DATT WHICH DEMONSTRATE CLEARLY THAT RLAF HAS THE BLADE TIME AND LIFT CAPABILITY TO ABSORB THE MISSIONS THE U.S. IS RELINQUISHING. I TOLD SISOUK THAT HE WOULD SURELY BE EXPOSED TO ALL KINDS OF MOANS AND GROANS ON THIS SUBJECT BUT THAT RLAF COULD AND MUST DO THE JOB. HE AGREED THAT IF RLAF APPLIED ITSELF TO THE TASK AT HAND, THE MISSION COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED EASILY.

5. NVA WITHDRAWAL. SISOUK WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC RE THE POSSIBILITY OF NVA WITHDRAWAL, AND SPECULATED ALOUD ON WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO PUBLICIZE FACT OTHER SIDE BREAKING AGREEMENT. FOR INSTANCE, HE WONDERED WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT BE USEFUL TO HAVE THE PRIME MINISTER OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE THE DEPARTURE OF ALL U.S. AND THAI TROOPS. I MADE CLEAR THAT WHILE THERE MIGHT BE SOME ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED OUT OF ALLOWING PRESS COVERAGE OF THE THAI AND U.S. WITHDRAWAL, I WAS DEAD SET AGAINST HAVING ANYONE OBSERVE OUR DEPARTURE UNLESS SIMILAR OBSERVATION OF THE OTHER SIDE WERE POSSIBLE. SISOUK SUGGESTED THAT I DISCUSS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE MANNER IN WHICH THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF THE NVA WILL BE HANDLED. I SAID I WOULD DO SO. THIS QUESTION IS MANIFESTLY A MATTER OF SERIOUS CONCERN TO HIM.

6. POLITICAL PREPARATIONS. I SUGGESTED TO SISOUK THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE OUGHT TO TRY TO ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS WHICH THE PATHET LAO WILL RAISE AND THAT AGREED POSITIONS ON THESE ISSUES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AMONG THE VARIOUS FACTIONS. SISOUK AGREED

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 03670 090313Z

THAT THE PL HAD THE INITIATIVE AND THAT THE VIENTIANE SIDE WAS FLABBY AND DISORGANIZED. HE TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT PL DISCIPLINE AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH SAM NEUA IS CALLING THE SHOTS. IN DISCUSSING POLITICAL SITUATION HE WAS OPENLY DESPONDENT, AND STRIKINGLY PESSIMISTIC REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE VIENTIANE SIDE PULLING ITSELF TOGETHER AND STANDING UP TO THE PL.

7. PL PROPAGANDA. I MENTIONED TO SISOUK MY CONCERN OVER THE TONE

OF PL PROPAGANDA AND OVER FONMIN PHOUMI'S RECENT PRESS INTER-
VIEWS NOTING THAT IN MY VIEW THE INTERVIEW WITH JANE FONDA HAD
BEEN UNFORTUNATE. SISOUK SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD SPOKEN
TO PHOUMI ABOUT THESE INTERVIEWS BUT THAT IN HIS VIEW THE PL
WERE PURPOSEFULLY TRYING TO PRETEND THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT
COMPLYING WITH THE AGREEMENT AND PROTOCOL IN ORDER TO DISTRACT
ATTENTION FROM THE NON-WITHDRAWAL OF THE NVA.
WHITEHOUSE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, MILITARY PLANS, TROOP REDUCTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENTI03670
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740112-0732
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740559/aaaacayg.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06-Aug-2002 by worrelsw>; APPROVED <10 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL ON MINISTER OF DEFENSE
TAGS: MCAP, MASS, LA, US, (SISOUK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005